

## I-80 HEADED WEST

comin down out of the sierras  
everything that bright new  
growth after a rain green  
my old lady sittin beside me  
in the cab beer between  
my legs a joint passin around  
merle haggard singin white line fever  
on the KRAK country corral  
out the windshield everything  
lookin so good  
so god damned good

## NOTE TO A PAINTER

i found it interesting  
that you labeled my comments  
about your woman pointless  
i don't think i've ever heard that word  
applied to anything  
other than modern art & writing  
  
& while perhaps you may be stuck  
with your paintings & your woman  
i am not  
with my poems or my woman  
even though i too have often found  
most women & most things  
pointless  
dull  
the knife never sharp enough  
to pierce the skin & share a slice  
  
but there are times when the cut  
is so quick so deep  
that a bold crimson swatch  
splashes across the page  
& the taste is incredibly sweet  
but those times are hard to see  
you must move quickly  
to catch them  
you have to listen  
even when you know  
there's no point  
to filling in the canvas



which is what i suppose  
john thomas was getting at  
when he pointed out that  
the difference between painters & poets  
is that the latter  
do not have to  
keep their hands still

#### ATASCADERO

comfortable new tract  
he doesn't plant dichondra  
or gravel but grapes chilis  
everything from artichokes to zucchini  
thrive he makes his own  
beer grows the largest  
begonias i've ever seen  
seems honestly happy  
riding his bike to work  
dispensing medication at  
the state mental hospital

#### THE FATHER POEM

i didn't know him very well  
he & my mother split up  
when i was 8 or 9 or 10  
and for the next few years  
i only saw him  
when he came to town  
once a year at the capri motel  
next to the LA airport  
then i moved out  
& even that stopped  
  
i was 22 or 23  
when i next heard from him  
a letter hastily written  
on half a sheet of paper  
dear kirk it said  
i guess i haven't been much  
of a father  
& perhaps i've developed  
a jaundiced attitude toward things  
but i've tried to do  
what i thought  
i had to do